

Application Serial No. 09/431,449
Amendment dated: August 15, 2006
Reply to Office Action dated: January 26, 2006

Remarks/Arguments

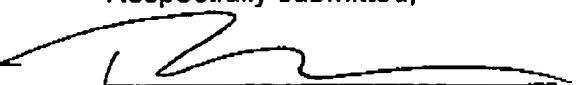
These remarks are in response to the Examiner's response to the Appeal Brief dated June 19, 2006. The Appeal Brief was filed after the Examiner issued an Office Action ("Office Action") dated January 26, 2006 with a final rejection of the claims. At the time of the Office Action, claims 1-20 were pending in the application. Claims 1-20 were finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

In a telephonic conversation on August 10, 2006 with the undersigned, the Examiner agreed to withdraw the final rejection dated January 26, 2006 if applicant agreed to amend the claims as submitted herein. Specifically, the Examiner agreed to withdraw the final rejection if applicant merged the limitations recited in claims 2 and 3 into base claim 1, the limitations recited in claims 8 and 9 into base claim 7, and the limitations recited in claims 14 and 15 into base claim 13. Accordingly, applicant has amended claims 1, 7 and 13 and has canceled claims 2, 3, 8, 9, 14 and 15. Further, since claim 3 was canceled claim 4 was amended to depend directly from claim 1. Similarly, the claim 10 was amended to depend from claim 7 since claim 9 was canceled. Finally, claim 16 was amended to depend from 13 since claim 15 was canceled.

Applicant believes that all claims are now in condition for allowance. Applicant invites the Examiner to call the undersigned if it is believed that a telephonic interview would expedite the prosecution of the application to an allowance. In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,

8-15-06
Date


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